

DOCUMENTS

IN SUPPORT OF

THE MEMORIAL

OF THE

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OF PHILADELPHIA,

*For the preservation of the piers at Reedy island.*

APRIL, 26, 1838.

*(Referred to the Committee on Commerce, and ordered to be printed.)*

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE,  
*Philadelphia, April 24, 1838.*

DEAR SIR: I transmitted, a few days since, to Mr. Buchanan, a memorial to Congress, respecting the decayed and dilapidated condition of the piers at Reedy island, which, as you will see by a perusal of the enclosed correspondence with Captain Vallette of the United States navy, has attracted his particular observation, and is a subject of the most pressing and urgent importance to the security of the navigation and commerce of the United States in the Bay of Delaware. It is hoped, therefore, that the clear and impressive views presented officially by Captain Vallette, and his thorough acquaintance with, and experience on, this subject, will claim your immediate attention, and lead to an appropriation being made, before the adjournment of Congress, for the repairs of those piers, which, otherwise, it may be too late to preserve from total destruction. Feeling assured that it will afford you pleasure to give effect to the application of the shipping interests and merchants through the chamber, by urging it on the immediate attention of the proper authorities,

I remain, with great consideration and respect,

Dear sirs, your most obedient servant,

D. W. COXE,  
*President.*

The Hon. JAMES BUCHANAN and SAMUEL M'KEAN,  
*Senate of the United States.*

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE,  
*Philadelphia, April 20, 1838.*

SIR: The Chamber of Commerce proposes to memorialize Congress on the subject of repairing the piers at Reedy island, which are understood to be in a very dilapidated and decayed condition, and it is believed that you

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are particularly acquainted with the facts. Under this impression, you might render essential service to the shipping interest of Philadelphia, and the commerce of the United States, by making known your own views and information to the proper department at Washington; and, by so doing, you will, moreover, confer a favor on

Yours, sir, very respectfully,

D. W. COXE,  
*President.*

To Captain E. A. F. VALETTE,  
*United States Navy.*

PHILADELPHIA, April 21, 1838.

SIR: I have received your letter of the 20th instant, in which you state, that "the Chamber of Commerce proposes to memorialize Congress on the subject of repairing the piers at Reedy island, which are understood to be in a very dilapidated and decayed condition, and it is believed that I am particularly acquainted with the facts. Under this impression, I might render essential service to the shipping interest of Philadelphia, and the commerce of the United States, by making known my own views and information to the proper department at Washington."

In reply I have to state, that it would afford me great satisfaction to be in the smallest degree instrumental in forwarding the shipping interest of Philadelphia, or the commerce of the United States, and as far as my services can go, and very limited influence extends, I shall be ever ready to offer it, to attain so desirable an object.

By an act of Congress of 1837, the Commissioners of the Navy were required to cause an examination to be made, for the purpose of ascertaining whether the safety of navigation required any additional facilities, and thereupon report their opinion in regard to all such places to the Secretary of the Treasury, &c. &c. Under this act was embraced nearly the whole line of our coast, and I was instructed by the commissioners to examine the mouth of Cohansey creek, the entrance of Maurice river, Reedy island, and the Brandywine shoal, with a view to the erection of a light-house at each of those places; that at the entrance of Cohansey is now in operation, that near the entrance of Maurice River soon will be. The difficulty in obtaining a title to Reedy island, I believe, is the cause why there is not a light-house upon it; and as it regards the Brandywine shoal, I am unacquainted with the reason, why the work intended there is not in progress.

The piers at Reedy island, not being within the scope of my instructions, were of course not embraced in my reports. I could not, however, overlook the great and important advantages which they could render to vessels during the winter season, by affording protection against the ice, if they were in a proper condition, but in their present ruinous state they are worse than useless, inasmuch as the channel is now much injured by the sand and other materials, which have been washed out of them through the decayed logs, and will continue to encroach upon the channel as long as they remain in their present condition, and anything remains to be washed out.

I consider the harbor at Reedy island of great importance in the winter season, and indeed the only one of safety to the larger class of vessels

navigating the Delaware, between the breakwater and New Castle. It is frequently the case in the winter, that vessels bound out, get as far down as Bombay Hook, and Moris Listing, which is more than two-thirds down the bay, and are obliged again to return to the shelter of Reedy island, so that the advantages of this harbor, with good and permanent piers, would be incalculable.

In my recent examination of points on the Delaware, several improvements and facilities to the navigation suggested themselves; but as it was not my province, and believing it might have been considered officious, I could not travel out of the limits of my instructions; and from the same considerations, (which I hope you will consider a sufficient apology,) I cannot offer now the subject to the consideration of the "proper department at Washington," but will most cheerfully render to the Chamber of Commerce, under the instructions of the Navy Department, any service within my humble capacity.

I am, very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

E. A. F. VALETTE.

To D. W. COXE, Esq.,

*President of Board*

*Chamber of Commerce, Philadelphia.*

